

Seattle City Council

**Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee Meeting**

2 p.m. Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jourdan Keith**

Today's poet is **Claudia Castro Luna**

**Claudia Castro Luna** was born in El Salvador and came to the U.S. as a young teenager fleeing the civil war. Since then she has completed an MA in Urban Planning, a teaching degree and an MFA in poetry. One can say she loves schools, but more than that she loves words -- and writing. Her work is informed by the experience of exile, war and by her work with residents of the inner city. She lives in West Seattle with her husband and three young children.

**Wake**

by Claudia Castro Luna

Not for what was left behind

30 years later, departure salty      still

Nor for what I wish to come

Lo que(se)rá será

But for the tight

Narrow

Abyss

Between the two

I live at a wake

The lilies on my desk know this

Petals paper thin, crumpled

They breathe simultaneous beauty

And decay

Outside the rain

Burrows deep inside the earth

My grief works the same way

Tunnels dug each day

Alongside limbic system, cardiovascular highways, digestive tracts

Alongside breath

I remain split

And folks with eagle eyes

And others with doe eyes

Offer hands, skin, as a way of unearthing a truth.

### **Choking my vernacular**

by Claudia Castro Luna

The small orifice, wishing to be called a window, has two crossing bars to prevent escape. Its design: to limit. From this cavity behold blue hill fragments, exiled lips, blank pages. This landscape of place born, suffusing everything-- even the poorest thoughts. Grafted meanings choke my vernacular. The universe lodged between pupil and eyelid compromises vision. Sometimes, a chip of song makes it through the bars. A quiet whisper soft and true. Sometimes, a veces, un pedazo de canción, a chip of song, a roar to swear by. A mark to live with; by. Such is mine.

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